**CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT**

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LETTER DATED 26 JANUARY 1966 FROM THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI

Sirs,

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a letter addressed to the Secretary-General by His Holiness Pope Paul VI dated 24 January 1966, containing an urgent appeal for disarmament, on the occasion of the resumption of the work of the Conference of the 18-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

Accept, Sirs, the assurances of my highest consideration.

P.P. Spinelli
Special Representative of the Secretary-General
to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation
Committee on Disarmament

66-02345

Mr. Secretary-General,

You are aware how closely We follow the efforts of the United Nations to promote peace. Now that the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament is to resume its work at Geneva, We wish to address to you an urgent appeal, inspired by the desire to see the work of this Committee culminate in positive and concrete results, and thus mark a new advance towards the achievement of disarmament, which is so unanimously awaited and desired. In taking this step, We are encouraged by the position recently adopted by over 2,000 Catholic bishops assembled at Rome at the Oecumenical Council. We are also encouraged by the response in the Disarmament Commission to the appeal We made in Bombay and by the favourable reception by world opinion of Our address to the United Nations. In speaking to advocate the great cause of disarmament, We are conscious that We are faithfully following in the path traced by Our predecessors. To quote only the more recent of these predecessors, you are aware of the lucid approach which Pius XII, adopted to the problem from the first War Christmas of his Pontificate. In praying for the advent of an order based on law to succeed the ruins of war, he said that, if the order so established was to enjoy tranquility and permanence, which were the foundations of a true peace, the nations must be delivered from the onerous enslavement of the armaments race and from the danger that material force, instead of serving to guarantee right, might become, on the contrary, a tyrannical instrument for the violation of peace terms which did not attach fundamental importance to disarmament reached by mutual agreement, a disarmament that was organic and progressive, both from the practical and the spiritual point of view, and which, since they did not aim at its honest achievement, would sooner or later reveal their inconsistency and precariousness. Justice, right, reason and humanity, Pope John XXIII proclaimed in his memorable encyclical letter "Pacem in Terris", demand that the arms race should cease, that a general agreement should be reached about disarmament and an effective method of control.

In intervening in Our turn in this sphere, We certainly do not pretend to ignore the complexity of the problem, or to be unaware of the vast difficulties which the United Nations bodies concerned have been facing since their foundation with a resolution and competence to which it is only right to pay a tribute.

There is, however, no denying that, with every day that passes, it is becoming more and more obvious that no lasting peace can be established among men until there has been an effective, general and controlled reduction in armaments. With every day that passes, the contrast also becones more painful and acute between the huge sums being swallowed up by the manufacture of armaments and the immense and growing material distress of over half the human race, whose most elementary needs remain unsatisfied. We are confident that you will receive this intervention on Our part as a testimony of the esteem in which We hold the authority of the United Nations and the high qualifications of the members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. We would also ask you to see in it the echo of an ardent hope cherished by the men of today, whose views We believe We can and should convey to you on behalf of the Oecumenical Council that has just been held in Rome. It is in this spirit that We express Our wishes for the complete success of the forthcoming discussions at Geneva and that We call for the blessing of Almighty God on these discussions and on those who are to take part in them.

(Signed) PAUL VI

The Vatican,
24 January, 1966